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Yoshio KODAMA and Minoru TAKANO as Soldiers of Fortune

Yoshio KODAMA is not an ultra-nationalist today. He is rather a perfect businessman with political affiliations. He takes no notice of the movement for reorganization of survived ultra-nationalists any more. At present he is very intent on supporting Ichiro HATOYAMA and Mamoru SHIGEMITSU.

When he was 19 years old, he entered the Kenkoku-kai, an ultra-nationalists' association led by Bin AKAO. At that time a group of leftists moved to form a new Labor-Farmer Party. With the firm conviction that to prevent this movement, it would be necessary to rescue jobless persons numbering 2,000,000, he attempted a direct appeal to the Emperor. He was put into prison for a breach of the Petition Act. But he did not abandon his original intention. It is surprising, however, that from around that time KODAMA apparently began to be bent on making money. Unable to get along with AKAO, he bolted from the Kenkoku-kai and joined the Kokusui-kai led by Yoichi SASAKAWA. During the war Mamoru SHIGEMITSU, the then Foreign Minister, granted money from secret service funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to SASAKAWA. KODAMA, too, set his eyes on secret service funds of the Ministry and established a connection with Toshio SHIPATORI, foreign advisor. Perhaps he judged that it was time for ultra-nationalists to emerge from the state of quasi-scoundrels and that he should directly join himself with state power and money related to it.

Receiving 3,000 yen from the chief of the Public Information Section, Foreign Office, KODAMA went to China and became a personal guard of WANG Chao-min. But he was full of business ambition. At that time there was a secret material procurement organ attached to the Navy in Shanghai. Its name was the Toko Commercial Firm. After its president was assassinated, KODAMA succeeded him and established the so-called Kodama Organ, whose assets were appraised at 3,200,000,000 yen at the time of termination of the war.

The people were puzzled to see that Yoshio KODAMA was appointed Cabinet councillor when the Higashikuni Cabinet was formed immediately after the end of the war. There was a rumor that KODAMA dedicated hidden assets of the Kodama Organ to the Cabinet. It was also reported that Mamoru SHIGEMITSU, the then Foreign Minister, recommended him as a Cabinet councillor in every way. It was through Karoku TSUJI that KODAMA came to know HATOYAMA. TSUJI patronized KODAMA. KODAMA supplied HATOYAMA with a considerable amount of political contributions. KODAMA also established a connection with the Bozen Keizai-kai (TN: The recent-ruined money lending agency). Once KODAMA maneuvered to materialize a Liberal-Progressive coalition cabinet with HATOYAMA in the premiership and SHIGEMITSU in the vice-premiership, by using money he might be able to draw from the Bozen Keizai-kai. It was reported that a considerably large amount of money had been channelled to the former Splinter Liberals and the Progressives from this money-lending agency through KODAMA. KODAMA is still now dreaming of the conservative merger after the fall of the Yoshida Cabinet.

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